

FOUR NEW SOUTH AFRICAN BUTTERFLIES

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(Continued from Vol. 93 page 221)

LYCAENIDAE

A new *Lepidochrysops* Hedicke from the Hantam's Berg, C. P.

The first specimen of this insect, a female, was secured by Mr. C. W. Wykeham on a small peak of the Hantam's Berg, N. of Calvinia, on 14th October, 1976, during an outing with the present writer. After a careful examination of the specimen it was concluded that it probably represented a new species (or subspecies) and Mr. Wykeham succeeded in obtaining two males and a further female when returning to the locality on 24th October, 1977, specially for this purpose. All the foregoing examples were, however, imperfect, and it was not until October, 1978, that the discoverer of this butterfly finally caught entirely fresh specimens. A description follows hereunder.

Lepidochrysops jamesi claassensi subsp. nov.

(In the absence of full proof, to date, of a specific difference, this butterfly is being treated in the meantime as a subspecies of *L. jamesi* Swanepoel (1971).)

Male (Upperside)

General colour golden-brown, the wing-surface having a decided sheen in certain lights. Basally, narrowly blackish. There is an indistinct discocellular marking in forewing, darker than its background. Some submarginal marking more or less discernible in hindwing, with usually a definite dark spot in area 2; and this marking as a whole sometimes faintly encircled by lightish scaling (very dull orange in the case of the spot mentioned), which may be more apparent outwardly. (In one paratype all such marking is virtually absent, apart from a small indistinct spot in area 2; and is very faint in the female allotype). A fine blackish marginal line present, wider in hindwing. Cilia white, with spaces of dark brown at ends of veins, which vary in their length, especially in hindwing, and may partly or largely obscure the white spaces, while the latter themselves may, in places, be terminally dark, or may have an intermediate dark line.

Underside

Ground-colour of all wings rather greyish-brown (but very considerably overlaid with white scaling and other white marking, in hindwing); and there is a little white scaling, discally, in the forewing.

*"Blencathra", Cambridge Avenue, St. Michael's Estate, Cape Town.

Forewing. All the marking of the dark and light type of the *Lepidochrysopt methymna* (L.) group is reduced in size and distinctness. Discocellular, rather lunular mark, with its white edging, relatively small in itself. Postdiscal series evenly curved from areas 2 to 6, the first (or lowest) component of the series in 1b decidedly more outwardly placed than the marking above it in 2. This series more than half-way between discocellular mark and the submarginal series, which is outwardly edged by blunt, not very well defined, white chevrons and inwardly by partly concave white scaling. Very narrow, pointedly-elongate (or principally so) dark marking beyond the last-named series edged inwardly with white scaling which continues, between this marking, to the white portions of the cilia itself. Cilia basically as on upperside, but with short incisions of the white portions entering the dark spaces, next to the wing-margin, and some dark edging outwardly.

Hindwing. Much suffusion of white scaling present in inner half of the wing between the basic marking of the general *methymna* type in this wing. The wing-surface is, however, virtually devoid of such suffusion below the costa and above vein 8. A very small blackish, outwardly white-edged marking present basally. The usual (for the *methymna* group) three sub-basal blackish spots occur in area 1a, the cell and area 7, the first small and the second elongated; while there is a relatively large black spot in area 1b and another in 7, and with the discocellular blackish marking of somewhat lunulate form. The six transverse discal spots, in areas 1b to 6 blackish to dark brown, and varying in size and shape; that in 2 well basad of the others, the smallest in 3 and the one in 4 markedly elongated in the holotype itself, while that in 6 is considerably more basad than the adjoining one. The dark brown submarginal marking from areas 2 to 7 bounded inwardly by largely well-formed, white sagittate markings, with the apices of some of them touching or nearly touching the outer white edging of some of the discal spotting. In area 1c the component representing part of the submarginal series is reduced in size and is not of a clearcut shape, though "doubled". There is a greater space between the submarginal series and the wing-margin, than in the forewing, with white-surrounded spaces occurring here (the white, pronounced outwardly); and a black spot in area 2 with a thin, approximate crescent or semi-circle of light metallic-bluish scaling, with the break in the semi-circle occurring inwardly; but in some areas there is only "haphazard" scaling here. Some similar scaling occurs on a minute black spot in area 1c. The elongated dark markings in contact with the wing-margin are at least partly joined by very fine dark lines. Cilia with the white spaces less pronounced than in forewing, owing to more encroachment of the dark portions. Though at first sight appearing to be largely dark-edged, close examination reveals an at least partial fine white edging to the cilia, with a dark line removed a little from the extreme edge — this applying in part also to the cilia of the forewing.

Length of forewing: 15.0 — 16.75 mm. (the former measurement, in holotype).

Female.

The forewing is less acute apically than in the male.

Upperside.

Similar to male; but the female allotype, anyway, is lighter and more golden in colouring than the male holotype. The allotype also shows only the barest trace of a dark spot in area 2 (without any bluish scaling), and which is not much more apparent than the indications of other submarginal spots in this wing.

Underside.

Like that of male. In the allotype, in all wings, the main spotting is smaller than in the male holotype (the two lowest spots in forewing, vestigial), but this feature is variable, individually.

Length of forewing: 15.25 – 17.75 mm. (the former measurement in holotype).

In both sexes the thorax is black above, with brown to fawn-coloured hair and, beneath, bearing greyish hair. Abdomen above blackish to rather dark golden-brown, which tone continues down the sides to the mainly whitish to light grey ventral area, and with the segmental divisions laterally white or whitish. Legs mainly greyish-white, with a silvery metallic sheen; the tarsi finely ringed with black, except in the case of the forelegs of the male. Head black or blackish frontally and with dark hair above. Eyes black, almost encircled with shining white scales. Palpi blackish, with greyish-white spinous scaling on sides and beneath. Antennae black, ringed with white, with the white accentuated along lower portion of shaft; the club with a white or whitish streak outwardly, which curves round the upper outer portion just before the tip, and the club deep rufous-coloured on its under-side.

♂ Holotype, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE: Hantam's Berg, Calvinia, 9.X.1978 (C. W. Wykeham); British Museum Reg. No. Rh. 18697.

♀ Allotype, W. CAPE PROVINCE: data as for holotype; British Museum Reg. No. Rh. 18698.

Paratypes in Coll. C. W. Wykeham: data as for holotype, 14.X.1976, one ♀ (C. W. Wykeham); 24.X.1977, two ♂♂, one ♀ (C. W. W.).

Paratype in Pringle Collection: data as for holotype, 14.XI.1978, one ♀ (V. E. and E. L. Pringle).

This insect is allied to *L. mcgregori* Pennington (*Ann. Natal Mus.* 20(2): 377-379, figs. 3, 5; 1 pl. in colour (1970) and, as already indicated, to *L. jamesi* Swanepoel (*Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* 83(3): 97-99 (1971), but is clearly more closely related to the latter insect. In the description of the latter the colour of the upperside is stated to be dark brown with a *coppery* sheen, and if this is correct, the sheen must be different from the golden or brassy sheen of the present insect. On the basis of the original description and half-tone figures of the second insect mentioned in this paragraph, the present butterfly lacks, on the upperside, the *well-developed* orange ring of the dark submarginal spot in area 2 of the hindwing; and there are virtually no "internervular dark markings along distal margins", as mentioned for the female of the other

insect. On the underside there appears to be considerably less prominent development of the white marking in general, in both sexes and in all wings, than in the other insect, this being especially noticeable as regards certain individual components of this marking, as is apparent in a comparison with the figures concerned. From the available material, the present insect seems to be decidedly smaller than the other one, the average expanse being 30.83 mm. for males and 31.75 mm. for the females, as against 35 mm. for both the holotype and allotype of the latter (no other measurements being given with the description). A comparison of the male genitalia of the two insects has not been possible up to the time of writing.

This butterfly was discovered at one of the highest points of the Hantam's Berg, at an elevation of up to 5,447 ft. above sea-level, and flying round a rocky eminence. The flight-period appears to be short, although its full extent is not known. Perfectly fresh specimens were caught on 9th October and by the 24th of the month most if not all examples secured had clearly been out for some time; yet the Pringles have encountered, mostly worn, specimens as late as 14th November. Most specimens soon became damaged by the strong winds of this mountainous terrain.

This butterfly has been named after Dr. A. J. M. Claassens as a small token of appreciation of his meticulous and most important work on the myrmecophilous life-histories of several species of *Lepidochrysops* in the Cape Peninsula.

Most grateful thanks are due to Mr. Wykeham for his provision and even presentation of specimens for the present study.

HYPERA FUSCOCINEREA MARSH., ETC. (COL.: CURCULIONIDAE) IN S. E. LONDON. — This species (probably more familiar to many as *H.*, or *Phytonomus murina* F.) is one of the less common of the genus and seems very local; up to this year (1981) I had encountered it only in the Thames Estuary area many years ago, and then very sparingly. I was surprised, therefore, to sweep a few examples on Woolwich Common at the end of May, and two more about mid-June. The latter certainly came off tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca* L.), which may well be the principal foodplant. A curious point is that the most frequent member of the genus here previously, viz. *H. postica* Gyll., failed to turn up at all — seeming to have been replaced on the common by its close ally *H. fuscocinerea*; but as I noted it there in the year or two preceding, its apparent eclipse is probably only temporary. *H. nigrirostris* F. (cf. *Ent. Rec.* 91: 77) has been less infrequent there this season, though still always occurring singly — including a few of the brown form; whilst a fine specimen of the large *H. punctata* F., seldom seen here, was swept on the common on 25 August.

I should perhaps also mention the occurrence for the first time here of the plantain weevil *Mecinus pyrastrer* Hbst. (4 earlier and 2 later in the summer), in the same locality. Even outside the London area I find it to be far from general, despite what the books state; whereas *Gymnetron pascuorum* Gyll. and *Ceuthorhynchidius troglodytes* F., living on the same plant, are common here as, I believe, almost everywhere. — A. A. ALLEN.